

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Delaware?

Mr. KILDEE. Reserving the right to object, Mr. Speaker, and I will not object, I yield to the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) to explain his request.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to encourage Members to support S. 447. Although it would be my intention to consider amendments to Impact Aid during the authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act this bill addresses a problem of a more urgent nature.

In filing for 1999 Impact Aid funds, the Dodson Public Schools in Dodson, Montana, inadvertently forwarded their original application to the National Association of Federally Impacted Schools and not the Department of Education.

The mistake was not discovered until after the filing deadline.

For many school districts, the loss of Impact Aid funds would have minor consequences. This is not the case for Dodson Public Schools. Impact Aid provides a third of the funding for the school district. Without these funds, the school could close and 120 children might have to travel great distances to find alternative education.

This is a small bill with a large impact. I urge my colleagues to pass this legislation, and I believe that the gentleman from Montana (Mr. HILL) will explain it further.

Mr. KILDEE. Further reserving the right to object, Mr. Speaker, I yield to the distinguished gentleman from Montana (Mr. HILL).

Mr. HILL of Montana. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the effort of the chairman and the ranking member bringing this measure forward. This bill is designed to solve a funding crisis for the Dodson School District in Dodson, Montana. This is a small, rural community. It has historically provided a quality, progressive education opportunity for a unique bicultural group of students. It is located about 3 miles outside the eastern border of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation.

The Dodson schools are near closure. What happened is a former administrator sent the application for Impact Aid entitlement to the wrong location, and that would impact about a third of the district's funding. The current law prohibits the Secretary of Education from reconsidering any school that misses that application deadline, making it necessary for the Montana delegation to offer this legislation to correct the problem.

This school is the hub and the life of this community, and the loss of these funds would likely mean the demise of the entire public school system, a system that serves many residents of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation.

The economic state of Montana's reservation economy is suffering and losing this school district would also have adverse economic impacts. That is the reason the Congress needs to act in this expedited measure.

I would like to thank the House leadership and the Committee on Education and the Workforce for recognizing the importance of these students and I want to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Chairman GOODLING), and the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE), the subcommittee chairman, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE), the ranking member, and Majority Leader ARMEY and all their staff in helping to try to bring this measure.

I rise in strong support of S. 477, legislation designed to solve a funding crisis for the Dodson School District in Dodson, Montana.

The small rural community of Dodson has historically provided quality, progressive educational opportunities for a unique bicultural group of students. The school is located in the tiny community of Dodson, three miles outside the eastern fringe of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation.

Despite its non-reservation location status, the school's student clientele has consistently been comprised of 60% to 70% Assiniboine-Gros Ventre students, few of who live within the town itself. In fact, the majority of the student population commutes from surrounding farms and ranches.

Several of Dodson's students are out-of-district children who reside in Blaine County whose boundaries lie from ten to twenty miles west and south of the community. Their parents request permission from the board of trustees for the privilege of attendance.

Dodson Public Schools are near closure after a former administrator sent the application for Impact Aid Entitlement, which provide approximately one third of the district's funding, to the wrong office. A provision in current law prohibits the Secretary of Education from reconsidering schools that miss the application deadline, making it necessary for the Montana delegation to introduce legislation to correct the problem.

These students are victims of a bureaucratic regulations that should be an easily reconciled mistake. The loss of funds would likely mean the demise of the entire public schools system—a system that serves many residents of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation. The economic state of Montana's reservations is not well and losing this school district would require many students additional transportation costs and travel of over thirty miles. Additionally, adjoining school districts and local governments would be extremely pressed to pick up the tab for additional education and transportation costs with a much lower revenue share. This is the reason that the Congress should act on this legislation in an expedited nature.

Dodson Public Schools has a total enrollment of 120 students in K-12. In grades K-8, 53% of the total 74 students reside on federal land. In grades 9-12, 31% of the total 46 students reside on federal land. Of the total enrollment, 75% of the students are eligible for our free and reduced lunch program.

Without these funds, the capability of the district to provide continued quality education

would be seriously jeopardized. In fact, it is possible that closure would be eminent. Sadly, families would be forced to relocate during the school year to access educational services for their children.

The school is the hub and life of the community. I am please that the House leadership and the Education Committee recognize the importance of swift action for the students in Dodson. The House Committee on Education and Majority Leader Arme's staff's have worked diligently to seek the expedited approval of this important legislation. I want to thank the House on behalf of the students and community of Dodson, Montana.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Delaware?

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the Senate bill, as follows:

S. 447

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. IMPACT AID.

The Secretary of Education shall deem as timely filed, and shall process for payment, an application for a fiscal year 1999 payment under section 8003 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7703) from a local educational agency serving each of the following school districts if the Secretary receives that application not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act:

(1) The Dodson Elementary School District #2, Montana.

(2) The Dodson High School District, Montana.

The Senate bill was ordered to be read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on S. 447.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Delaware?

There was no objection.

#### EDUCATION FLEXIBILITY PARTNERSHIP ACT OF 1999

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). Pursuant to House Resolution 100 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 800.

□ 1240

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 800) to provide for education flexibility partnerships, with Mr. PEASE in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.